



*Graduate School of Education
and Allied Professions
Office of the Dean*

Testimony for the Education Committee
From
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March 19, 2015

Good afternoon Representative Fleischmann, Senator Slossberg and members of the Education Committee. As Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions at Fairfield University, I am here today to speak about several bills on today's agenda.

First, I echo the concerns expressed by my colleague Kevin Basmadjian of Quinnipiac University, I have significant concerns about **HB 7021, An Act Concerning Teacher Preparation Program Efficacy**. I will not duplicate all of those concerns here, but would echo that this bill seems to duplicate and largely ignore the ongoing progress being made on this matter elsewhere in our state.

SB 1098, An Act Concerning Teacher Certification Requirements for Shortage Areas, Interstate Agreements for Teacher Certification Reciprocity, Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention and Cultural Competency Instruction, makes a variety of changes to the education statutes regarding teacher certification.

I strongly support the change made in Section 5, which appears to revert the elementary education certification back to covering grades K-6, and not just grades 1-6 as per revisions a few years back. There are simply not enough teachers certified in early education to meet the demands for kindergarten in this state. I would ask that the Committee consult the State Department of Education in further developing this language. Does the change intend to grandfather teachers certified after July 1, 2013?

I have concerns about the proposal in Section 6 of the bill, which mandates that OHE establish an Alternate Route to Certification in administration and early education. ARC programs are typically reserved for shortage areas and there is currently no shortage of candidates holding the 092 certification.

Our concerns regarding Section 8 of this bill, which requires OHE to submit to SDE a report on teacher candidate demographics are similar to those presented by Basmadjian regarding HB 7021. From what I understand, SDE has some of these data already and is better positioned to collect it from the institutions directly or through its work in P20 WIN.

Section 9 of this bill requires teacher preparation programs to cover instruction in cultural competency. While I recognize the importance of this issue, and our programs already include instruction on this topic, I must take this opportunity to state for the record, as my colleagues have likely done in the past, that even minor statutory changes in the teacher certification requirements cause disruption to our programs and the curriculum. Further, mandating that specific curriculum items be covered without closely examining the big picture, can be hurtful to our students.



The State Department of Education has very extensive guidelines and regulation regarding candidate requirements – statutory additions on top of these changes make it very difficult to effectively and efficiently plan a program for our students, especially when changes occur annually. I ask that, moving forward, there is more consultation with the institutions of higher education that must implement these changes, sometimes in less than a few weeks notice.

Last, we request that there be greater representation by the higher education community on the Planning Commission proposed by **SB 1099, An Concerning the Establishment of a Commission to Develop a Vision and Strategic Plan for the Connecticut Education System**. We prepare this state's future teachers and have deep experts in this field that could inform the conversation.